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THREE CANADIANS CRACK THE TOP-15 DURING OPENING DAY OF BIATHLON JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN ITALY
- Alberta's Scott Gow is top Canuck on the day in ninth-place -

Martell – Val Martello, ITA – The Canadian team kick-started the Youth/Junior Biathlon World Championships in fine form Wednesday, posting a top-10 and two top-15 finishes in the men's individual races in Martell-Val Martello, Italy.

In his first appearance at the World Championships, Calgary's Scott Gow was the top man of the day, grabbing ninth-place in the youth men's 12.5-kilometre individual, two minutes 24.3 seconds off the leading pace set by the winner from Poland. With only two misses on the range, Gow demonstrated the confidence of a veteran.

"Today was a really strong start for the team," said Daniel Lefebvre, national team coach. "To have this young athlete come out and post such a terrific result in his first world championships is very encouraging. Scott had no expectations, and with that, no limitations. He shot very well and in the individual race, that can take you a long way."

Meanwhile, in the junior men's 15-kilometre individual, 20-year-olds Brendan Green and Yannick Letailleur produced the breakthrough results they were looking for against the world's best. A native of Hay River, N.W.T., Green came through in 12th spot, just over four minutes behind the winner from Belarus. Letailleur, of Edmonton, finished right behind him in 13th. Both were very strong on the range, with only three errors apiece.

"Not only did we have a top-10 finish in the youth event, but our junior men turned in two stellar performances as well," said Lefebvre. "Brendan and Yannick both shot really well today and that translated into two great results. Hopefully today's results will inspire the team to more strong finishes throughout the week."

Notably, five other young hopefuls suited up for Canada in today's race. In the youth men's event, Daniel Robb, of Edmonton, finished 62nd; Kurtis Wenzel, of Calgary, finished 66th; and Stuart Lodge, also of Calgary, finished 71st. As for the junior men, Marc-André Bédard, of Valcartier, Que., finished 30th; and Maxime Leboeuf, of Val Bélair, Que., was 45th.

The Canadian youth and junior women make their first appearance Thursday in Italy. For full schedule information, please visit www.biathlonworld.com

Biathlon Canada, the governing body for biathlon in the country, oversees the Canadian Championships, Eastern and Western Canadian Championships, and North American Cups held in Canada. The organization's mandate is to provide national level programs for the continuous development of biathlon athletes from the grassroots to the elite level. For more information on Biathlon Canada, please visit their website at **www.biathloncanada.ca**

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